



WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE

19th District News

Winter 2005



Senator
Mark Doumit

405 John A. Cherberg Bldg.
PO Box 40419
Olympia, WA 98504-0419
Phone: (360) 786-7636
E-mail:
doumit.mark@leg.wa.gov



Representative
Dean Takko

421 John L. O'Brien Bldg.
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
Phone: (360) 786-7806
E-mail:
takko.dean@leg.wa.gov



Representative
Brian Blake

339 John L. O'Brien Bldg
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
Phone: (360) 786-7870
E-mail:
blake.brian@leg.wa.gov

Toll-free Legislative Hotline:

1-800-562-6000

TDD (for hearing-impaired):

1-800-635-9993

Let's build a better Washington

Dear neighbors,

How can we make this a better place for you to live, work and raise a family? How can we build a better Washington for our children and grandchildren?

The answer is easy:

- Better schools,
- Better jobs, and
- Better health care.

We're committed to breaking through partisan gridlock in Olympia to pass common-sense reforms.

The citizens of Washington State want us to be partners, not partisans. It is time to get to work, serving people, not political parties.

Inside this newsletter, you'll find details about reforms to improve our schools, create jobs, and fix health care.

We're interested in what you think – and in your family's experiences with these three issues.

Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving as your representatives to the Legislature. As always, we welcome your ideas, comments and questions.

Sincerely yours,

Mark Doumit

State Senator
19th Legislative District

Dean Takko

State Representative
19th Legislative District

Brian Blake

State Representative
19th Legislative District

Senator Mark Doumit

Representative Dean Takko

Representative Brian Blake

◆ Education: Staying above the curve

The statistics are troubling and show how critical it is that we take action.

- One out of three kids drops out of high school.
- Recent numbers show that Washington ranks 42nd out of 50 states in per-student funding.
- Our classrooms are overcrowded and local school districts are scrambling for money.

That's not right, and we can do better!



Education is the foundation for prosperity and needs to be our top priority. We need to find ways to get more money to our classrooms and retain good teachers.

We are working to expand

retraining and college opportunities so that our workers are prepared for new jobs. The economy doesn't run on horsepower anymore – it runs on brainpower.

Everyone in our state should have the opportunity to get a world-class education and we will do our part to make this a reality.



Simple Majority for our Schools

It's wrong to let a minority of voters hold our schools back. How can it be fair to elect lawmakers with 50 percent of the vote, but set a much higher bar for our local schools?

We support a reform to let schools pass levies with a simple majority – 50 percent plus 1 – instead of today's supermajority of 60 percent. This reform would make it easier for our communities to fix old and overcrowded schools.

This year, it is our hope that the House, Senate, and Governor will all work together to pass this legislation into law.



19th District News

◆ Jobs:

Washington; A great place to do business.

We need to find a way to put people back to work, and families in the 19th need to come first, *especially in tough economic times*. It seems like a simple enough concept, but a lot of legislators forget who they are elected to represent.

More than any other state, Washington depends on international trade and tourism for our jobs. We need to provide economic incentives to further diversify our economy. It is unhealthy to rely too heavily upon one industry. Southwest Washington is an attractive place to work and live and we need to let businesses know.

Overregulation

The 19th District economy was built by logging, fishing and farming. Family businesses create most of the jobs in our communities. We need to work hard to stabilize our traditional industries and fight against burdensome regulations. Government needs a balanced approach when it comes to the environment and jobs.

This year we continue our ongoing efforts to pass common sense reforms for small businesses. These include:

- Reforms to make hydraulic permitting more predictable, consistent and efficient;
- Reforms to make state regulatory agencies more flexible and responsive toward small businesses.



◆ Lewis and Clark: Reliving our history

Exactly two hundred years ago **Meriwether Lewis, William Clark and the members of their famous expedition came to our region.** It is a historic time and people will be coming from all over the world to visit the area where they first saw the Pacific "Ocian." Washington State Parks will be bustling as people flock to our region to retrace Lewis & Clark's footsteps.

If you would like more information on this summer and fall's activities, contact the Washington State Parks Department by phone, (360) 902-8844 or by email, infocent@parks.wa.gov. You can also visit their website, <http://www.parks.wa.gov/lewisandclark/> to get a complete list of events.

Representative Dean Takko

Representative Brian Blake

Senator Mark Doumit

◆ Healthcare

We need a better prescription

Why should our tax dollars go toward giving convicts healthcare while workers, kids and many seniors all go without? The rising costs of health insurance have placed a huge burden upon our families, our businesses, and our pocketbooks. We need to work to find ways to lower costs for doctors while protecting the rights of their patients.

It's an injustice that folks who work hard and play by the rules can't afford health insurance for their families. Healthcare should not be a privilege and we will continue to fight for coverage, especially for our kids.



Prescription drugs

More and more people can't afford the medicines they need. Prescription drugs are becoming the most expensive part of health care.

Reform will:

- Give people the prescription medicines they need without making them choose between paying for pills or the heating bill;
- Help the state balance the budget, as prescription costs skyrocket and drive up the price of health care;
- Cut costs for businesses, especially small businesses hurt by the rising costs of health coverage for workers.

19th District News

◆ Budget: Once again we find ourselves pinching pennies

Here we go again!

As of early January, it was estimated that we will need just under \$2 billion *just to maintain existing programs and services*.

These are funds that do things like:

- Provide health care for thousands of Washington's families.
- Teach hundreds of thousands of Washington's students.
- Keep families of the 19th district safe.



These are programs and services that most citizens want their state to provide. Together we will be taking a tough look at all of our state programs to see where we might be able to save money.

The 19th District will be our Priority!

Two years ago we pledged to make politics local, and once again you can count on us to make sure that the state budget is not balanced on the back of the 19th District.

Yes, there will be cuts to the state budget — and people all over the state will feel the effects. But we won't stand for our district taking an unfair burden of the cuts.

Any new budget we ultimately support must:

- Give young people the opportunity to succeed.
- Support working families.
- Let seniors have the resources they need to live comfortably.

Any budget will have to pass the 19th District litmus test. We will work hard to ensure that our coastal and Southwest Washington communities have the opportunity they need to succeed.

◆ Election 2004: A clear need for reforms

What should happen when an election is as close and as contentious as the recent governor's race was?

Clearly, we need to adopt comprehensive election reform in our state to prevent this sort of problem from occurring again.

Together, with Republican Secretary of State Sam Reed, we are looking at a host of election reform laws that will seek to make the process more streamlined and accurate. Some of these reforms

include moving the date of the primary and making the Secretary of State a **nonpartisan** elected office.



Committees and Leadership:

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Your opinion matters. We'd like to hear from you, whether it's a question about an issue, an idea you have for legislation or to tell your family's story.

You can contact us by phone, letter or e-mail. We read every message from citizens from the 19th District and make it a priority to respond as quickly as possible.



**Senator
Mark Doumit**

- *Vice Chair* — Ways & Means
- *Vice Chair* — Natural Resources, Oceans & Recreation
- International Trade & Economic Development
- Rules
- Coastal Caucus



**Representative
Dean Takko**

- Transportation
- Local Government
- Technology, Energy & Communications
- Coastal Caucus

**Representative
Brian Blake**

- Capital Budget
- Economic Development, Agriculture & Trade
- Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks
- Rules
- Coastal Caucus

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U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Washington State
Department of Printing

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PO BOX 40600
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Printed on recycled paper